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Lucia A Keegan 09/13/2006 09:47:33 AM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 06118

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cyparis:
ACTION: UNESCO
INFO: POL ECON DCM SCI AMBU AMB AMBO

DISSEMINATION: UNESCOX
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:LOLIVER
DRAFTED: POL:DOSTROFF
CLEARED: DCM:AKOSS

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1252
INFO RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2485
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0890
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0553
RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 006118

SIPDIS

FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/12/2016
TAGS: [UNESCO](#) [SCUL](#) [AL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: (U)UNESCO: LEBANON RESOLUTION UPDATE IV

REF: A. PARIS 5463 (notal), B. PARIS 5653 (notal), C. PARIS
5768, D. Paris 5853

Classified by DCM Andrew Koss, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Israeli ambassador met again with Ambassador Oliver on September 12 to exchange information about resolutions for the upcoming Executive Board on Lebanon, Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories. The Israeli indicated that any anti-Israeli language in the Lebanon resolution could result in the end of his country's cooperation with UNESCO. He also reiterated Israeli opposition to any substantive change in the Jerusalem and Occupied Territories resolutions. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Israeli ambassador David Kornbluth met again with Ambassador Oliver on September 12 to discuss Israeli issues at the upcoming Executive Board (EB). Kornbluth reported that he had met earlier in the week with the Palestinian observer to UNESCO and the Jordanian ambassador to UNESCO to discuss the EB documents on safeguarding the Old City of Jerusalem (175 EX/15) and the resolution on education initiatives in the Occupied territories (175 EX/44). According to Kornbluth, the Palestinian indicated that he would like to add the word "social" to the Jerusalem resolution. They tried this last year before withdrawing the word due to Israeli opposition; Israel will continue to oppose the insertion of that word. (Comment: It is a good sign that the Israeli ambassador has developed direct lines of communication with the PA observer and the Jordanian.)

¶3. (C) The upcoming EB resolution on Lebanon was also discussed. Kornbluth made it clear that any language critical of Israel in the text would lead to Jerusalem "pulling the plug

on Israeli cooperation with UNESCO." An ominous sign came last week when the Lebanese delegation issued a strong statement using harsh language to condemn Israel. (Comment: Strongly worded political statements at UNESCO are usually vehicles of communication for countries like Cuba, Venezuela or China. We checked with the US Mission in Geneva to see if this was a statement making the rounds of UN organizations and they reported they had not previously seen the Lebanese document.)

¶4. (C) Arab group members of UNESCO told the DCM on September 12 that there was a meeting last week to discuss the Lebanon issue but so far there is no text. The Arab group will meet again on September 21. Kornbluth mentioned that the Jordanian ambassador had told him that the text will probably be drafted in Beirut. Ambassador Oliver said it might be useful if the Lebanese present a strong text not written in Paris, as none of the Arab ambassadors at UNESCO would feel compelled to protect "their" text. She added that if the Lebanese present politicized language similar to their statement that is not germane to UNESCO's mandate, it might be easier to quash.

¶5. (C) The Lebanese delegation has also announced that the Lebanese culture minister will attend the opening of the Executive Board plenary on October 2. (Comment: Each delegation gets eight minutes to speak early in the plenary. If the statement in para 3 is any guide, we expect that he will use Lebanon's eight minutes to deliver a strongly-worded message.) Still, our Arab group contacts, including Morocco (which is often hard-line in these matters) tell us they wish to avoid politicizing UNESCO's involvement in Lebanon and keep discussion on a technical level.

¶6. (C) The Israeli added that he was not sure if the Israeli embassy in Washington has yet reached out to the Department, requesting US intervention with the Lebanese government but expressed a hope that would happen, since it appears that Beirut may play a central role in this matter.

¶7. (C) On another subject, after reviewing the UNESCO Director-General's last press release on Lebanon issued last Friday, the Israeli felt that the wording of the text appeared to pose no problems (he would have to check with Jerusalem to be sure) and that the DG's office was clearly making a real effort to be even-handed and to satisfy US and Israeli concerns.

¶8. (C) Kornbluth will be meeting on September 13 with the Finnish president of the EU. Ambassador Oliver also will be meeting with EU and various Arab group ambassadors in coming days. They promised to keep each other apprised of details.

Oliver